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RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004267

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 15 MCNS ON MOD REFORM

REF: BAGHDAD 4226

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel V. Speckhard for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/REL UK, AUS) SUMMARY: On November 15, Minister of Defense Abdul Qader presented a report on MoD reform to the Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS), focusing on the current situation in the ministry. Following the MinDef's presentation, National Security Advisor Rubaie said the ministerial committee on security sector reform had made a number of recommendations relating to the infiltration, balancing, and structure of the MoD. After MNF-I Commanding General Casey raised concerns about the chain of command implications of the structural changes, the MCNS agreed to send that recommendation back to the committee for further study. The MCNS approved the other recommendations. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (S/REL UK, AUS) In an unusual mid-week meeting of the Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS), Minister of Defense Abdul Qader presented a detailed study on the current structure, ethno-sectarian balance, and terrorist/militia/party infiltration of the MoD. Following his presentation, National Security Advisor Rubaie said that the ministerial committee tasked with looking at security service reform had made a series of recommendations in each of these areas.

¶3. (S/REL UK, AUS) Rubaie said that the committee had made a number of recommendations on how to "clean" the ministry of terrorist/militia/party infiltration, including:

- conducting background checks on recruits and staff members;
- reforming and activating de-Baathification efforts within the context of larger national reconciliation efforts;
- creating a joint committee to assess performance;
- requiring that those joining the armed forces sever any existing active party links;
- listing the names of those known to be linked to terrorist or militia groups; and
- forming an office to do security checks and supervise implementation of the other points. This office would be linked to the National Vetting Office.

¶4. (S/REL UK, AUS) On ethno-sectarian balancing, Rubaie said the committee did not believe that quotas should be instituted -- recruitment should be based on qualifications

and loyalty to the state. Nevertheless, he said that efforts should be made to seek an improvement in the balance across all employment grades. Moreover, he said that efforts to balance the ministry should go below the division level to the brigade level. Arguing that the Iraqi Army was generally a good institution, FM Zebari warned his colleagues not to allow it to be destroyed in the effort to obtain "balance."

15. (S/REL UK, AUS) Turning to the structure of the MoD, Rubaie said that the committee had recommended that the Minister of Defense should be given direct control of the four operational forces: ground, air, navy, and special operations. He said that a Chief of Staff position would remain, but would only be given direct control of the training and support commands. The Chief of Staff would also prepare plans and orders for the MinDef's approval. Minister of State for National Security Waeli said that these structural changes would require legislation through the Council of Representative, a point Minister of Interior Bolani agreed with. When MNF-I Commanding General Casey noted the real possibility of confusion within this proposed chain of command, PM Maliki said the GoI was concerned about the possibility of coups if they consolidated too much power within the command structures of the uniformed military. Unlike the Turkish or Pakistani models, the PM said that they wanted to guarantee "civilian" control of the military. While acknowledging their concerns, General Casey reiterated his concerns about the chain of command and asked the committee to look at the issue again.

16. (S/REL UK, AUS) MCNS members agreed to send the chain of command issue back to the ministerial committee on security service reform for further study, but approved the other

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recommendations. Rubaie suggested that the committee should follow up on the implementation of the recommendations, perhaps reporting back to the MCNS periodically.  
SPECKHARD